

In the News

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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EXECUTIVE OFFICE
OF THE MAYOR
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Penn. Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20004
Phone: (202) 727-2980
Fax: (202) 727-6561
www.washingtondc.gov

Message from the Mayor

In my inauguration speech a few weeks ago, I focused on three themes as we start a new year and look toward the future. One of those themes, and perhaps the most important, is public safety. Despite recent improvements in public safety in the District of Columbia, our challenge is still a great one: to make all our streets safe and livable for our citizens.

On January 25, I hope citizens will join me, Chief Ramsey and other members of the Metropolitan Police Department, representatives from the US Attorney's Office, and community-based organizations at the District's Forum on Crime and Prevention at 8:30 am at Eastern Senior High School. We will focus on how the community and the police can work together to create safe communities. This forum will surely be an education for all of us, and a constructive way to improve public safety in our city.

At the forum, we will run a host of interactive "break out" sessions, in which citizens, city officials, and crime experts will discuss topics such as crime prevention, drug crimes, homicide, victims' issues, prostitution, re-entry, and quality of life issues. Each 50-minute break out session will be repeated in order to allow forum participants the chance to engage in several discussions. During each break out session, a moderator will transcribe the recommendations of the group. The recommendations from each session will be presenting during the forum's closing session.

Earlier this month, the District and federal governments held another innovative conference: the Project Safe Neighborhood Citywide Conference on Gun Violence. This novel forum brought together about 300 members of our community, including officials from law enforcement, corrections, city agencies, the judiciary, neighborhood associations, citizen advisory councils, and many others.

All of this is part of our Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative, through which we will seek to strengthen partnerships in our city and focus our efforts on paving a path for lasting change on our streets and in our neighborhoods.

Public safety must be a cornerstone of our strategy to improve our neighborhoods. I want people to move into the District into the neighborhoods we love. However, people will not buy homes, if they do not feel safe on our neighborhood streets. They will not send their children to after-school programs, if they worry about their children coming home safely. New businesses will not move to our commercial corridors, if they fear customers will be scared away by violence.

Our faith leaders, parents, and police officers working together are beginning to make progress in some neighborhoods. We must build on this work; and we must make certain that when someone is killed, our police force has the capacity to investigate swiftly and thoroughly with the sense of urgency we expect.

Note: I urge all of our residents to participate in our Martin Luther King Day celebrations in the District of Columbia. Our signature event is the 18th Annual King Holiday Celebration, "Peace, Justice, and Unity: A Concert for Peace," on Monday, January 20, at 10:30 am, in the Auditorium (Building 46) at the University of the District of Columbia, located at 4200 Connecticut Avenue, NW. Join us for a day of service—a day that we like to refer to as a "day on," instead of a "day off."



AGENCY WEBSITES

[Office of Tax and Revenue](#)

[Department of Parks and Recreation](#)

[Department of Employment Services](#)

[Metropolitan Police Department](#)

[Office of Boards and Commissions](#)

[Commission on the Arts and Humanities](#)

Employee Profile Calandra Lawrence

Calandra Lawrence has been a dispatcher with the Metropolitan Police Department for 10 years. During this time, she has always been willing to work in any capacity to get the job done. As a dispatcher, Calandra performs a variety of duties that include assigning units to calls for service, receiving inquiries regarding tag numbers, searching criminal status for police officers, returning calls to citizens, and receiving reports from Patrol Service Area (PSA) units.



Calandra Lawrence

In the past year, she has also spearheaded several programs on her own time that have improved the quality of life for those less fortunate in the DC area. In January 2002, she helped to organize members of the MPD Communications Division to participate in the Avon Breast Cancer Walk. They completed the 60-mile walk from the Baltimore Convention Center to Washington's Freedom Plaza. Together they raised and donated approximately \$13,000 for breast cancer research.

During the course of the year, Calandra also learned to crochet. With her newfound skill, she organized a program for employees interested in donating blankets, caps, and pillows to the needy. Members who did not crochet participated by donating materials, money, and time. Thanks to the employees' efforts, in December, all of the blankets, caps, and pillows made through this program were hand-delivered to the Hospital for Sick Children and Med Link Home for Senior Citizens.

Thanks to Calandra's generous and kind heart, many smiles and warm thoughts were brought to many people during the year 2002.

Our Commitment to Healthcare

Two weeks ago, our city held the second in a series of discussions to bring greater focus and attention to the issues and challenges facing the healthcare system in the District of Columbia. At the end of last year, we convened a summit with the administrators of our city's hospitals to discuss the complex issues facing their industry. As practitioners directly involved in the delivery of primary care, they are on the front lines.

How can we achieve our common goal of changing the behavior and the attitudes of the citizens we serve? How do we change the emphasis from decades of emergency care to one of primary and preventive care?

How can we assure that the providers of health services are more equally distributed across the District? How do we improve access to quality healthcare for the people in medically underserved areas of our city? How will we craft a medical home—a place where patients can obtain direct care, preventive care, referrals, and counseling?

These are difficult challenges, and we can't tackle them in a few days. However, earlier this month, we continued the dialogue.

During our first Healthcare Summit in December, I spoke about how—in the summer of 2001—the District government took a bold step to improve the healthcare of its most vulnerable citizens. We did so in the face of considerable resistance and skepticism. Now, at the start of a new year, I can say without hesitation that we have improved the quality of healthcare provided by the District government and that we have improved access to that healthcare through the DC Healthcare Alliance.

The DC Healthcare Alliance is a strong and vibrant network of clinics and individual providers. Together, we have achieved what many said could not be done. We have enrolled 28,000 District residents in the program to date. The Alliance is handling over 10,000 patient visits each month delivering specialty care, primary care, dental, prenatal, urgent, and inpatient care. We have filled roughly 200,000 prescriptions and handled over 15,000 emergency room visits. We have assessed patients who are eligible for federal Medicare or Medicaid coverage, and we have established clear criteria for residency to determine eligibility for the program.

The provider network and our enrollment initiatives are clearly working. In a very short period, we have made a difference in the lives of thousands of residents—residents who, for the most part, had given up on the possibility of obtaining health coverage.

We have replaced a chronically mismanaged healthcare program for the indigent, which was based on emergency care, with a comprehensive healthcare program with an emphasis on preventative care and family medicine. Now, it is our ongoing challenge to make the program work for healthcare providers as well as the patients they serve.

I fully recognize that there is room for improvement in how the Alliance operates. We need to do a better job managing the flow of payments to our partners. As we examine all these complex and difficult issues, let us do so with a spirit of cooperation and with a sense of common purpose. We want the dialogue to begin, and we want to listen to the experts. I know that if we all work together we can, and we will, see dramatic improvement in the health statistics for IV/AIDS, hypertension, asthma, diabetes, and other diseases afflicting our citizens.



LINK TO OTHER WEBSITES

[DC Agenda](#)

[Hands on DC](#)

[DC Convention and Tourism](#)

[DC Public Library](#)

Boxing Returns to the District

On January 4, I joined the DC Sports & Entertainment Commission to officially welcome the sport of boxing back to the District. It's been a long time since we had a major boxing event in our city, and I was thrilled to see a "main event" come to the DC Armory.

This event featured a hometown fighter and local hero, DeMarcus "Chop-Chop" Corley, who defended his World Boxing Organization Junior Welterweight title against Randall Bailey. The night consisted of two championship bouts broadcast on cable television's Showtime network.



Mayor Williams with DeMarcus "Chop-Chop" Corley and Randall Bailey.

The event—dubbed "DC Dynamite"—was promoted by Don King Productions in association with the DC Sports & Entertainment Commission and drew more than 3,000 boxing fans to the DC Armory for a night of jabs, hooks, and swift punches.

Corley, who was born and raised in Washington, DC, successfully defended his crown against the hard-punching former WBO Champion Randall Bailey of Miami, Florida. Corley won by unanimous decision by a panel of expert judges.

The 28-year old Corley also won the vacant WBO Junior Welterweight Championship by knocking out the rugged Felix Flores of Puerto Rico in the first round in Las Vegas, Nevada, on June 30, 2001. He successfully defended his title with an impressive decision victory over the former WBO Champion Eder Julio earlier this year on January 19 in Miami.

A sport rooted in American history, boxing is often controversial but can be thrilling at the same time. Great boxers like Muhammad Ali and Sugar Ray Leonard (a native of Palmer Park in Prince George's County) proved that the sport can be at once graceful and other times vicious. It's great to see young boxers like "Chop Chop" Corley make their way up the ranks in boxing.

District Web Portal Reaches 100,000 Pages

In the second week of January, as citizens across the District ushered in the New Year, I announced a significant technology milestone—the number of pages on the DC portal website reached 100,000. That's an impressive tally, especially considering that our government website was in its infancy only a few years ago.

The portal (<http://dc.gov>), which is made up of more than 50 District agency websites, offers citizens online services such as driver's license renewal and vehicle registration renewal. Furthermore, the agency websites provide citizens with important information such as road closings, business resources, recreational center listings, social service benefits, tax guidelines, news updates, and more.

Since 1999, the DC portal has consistently added new technologies and interactive tools to provide residents, businesses, visitors, and employees with greater access to government information and services online. Recent tallies show usage of the dc.gov site increased from about 1.5 million hits in 2001 to almost 100 million in 2002. Average hits per day jumped 60-fold, from 4,300 to 256,000. Top sites on the DC portal include the Mayor's website, and the websites of the Metropolitan Police Department, the DC Office of Personnel, the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs, the Department of Health, and the Department of Motor Vehicles.

I'm proud to say that the District has one of the finest municipal websites in the country. As more pages are added, the site becomes increasingly effective, enabling residents and visitors to get information and assistance at the touch of a button.

The DC portal has played an important role in achieving the District's goal of 'one city, one government.' It also plays an important role in reaching out to our citizens to provide them with the best services possible.



DC Consolidates Nine Data Centers

On January 8, I announced, along with our Chief Technology Officer Suzanne Peck, that the District government has consolidated hardware, software, and personnel from nine data centers into two, state-of-the-art, mainframe data centers. The results of this three-year effort are better service for DC government agencies and the public and an estimated annual savings of \$1.2 million.

This consolidation has not only saved us a significant sum of money, but our technology systems are operating better than ever. One of my goals has been to make government work more efficiently, and through this consolidation, we are doing so. That translates into a more effective, streamlined government to serve our citizens.

Only three years ago, the District government had nine separate data centers to keep our information systems operating and secure. Each center had its own hardware, software, and employees. The system involved duplication of effort and added costs. In 2000, the DC Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) devised a multiyear plan to consolidate the nine centers into two locations—one in Ward 7 and the other in Ward 6.

By the end of last year, a single pair of data centers housed two new IBM central processing units and enough capacity to store and back up all of the District's data. The two new centers mirror each other, allowing the District to recover critical data quickly in the event of a natural disaster or major system interruption.

Data center consolidation has numerous benefits, in addition to saving us about \$1.2 million per year. Further benefits include: automating functions to reduce the need for human intervention, errors, and rework; greater mainframe system availability, reliability, and serviceability; better protection of data integrity; and, greater stability and consistency in daily operations.

Along with new hardware and software, the centers have up-to-date wiring, air conditioning, flooring, ceiling tiles, and equipment; fire protection systems; new workspaces; and new physical security systems.

As with much of the work done in information technology, these feats were accomplished quietly but effectively, and I'm proud of the hard work of all of our employees who made this happen.

District Activities



The Post Office Pavilion was festive on Inauguration night.



Dunbar Senior High School ROTC presents colors at Inaugural Breakfast.



Several "Champions for Democracy" join Mayor Williams at DC Vote's annual awards gala on January 14. At the Mayor's left is Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton followed by Frank Rich Sr., DC Vote's Cynthia Robbins, and Ilir Zherka.



Mayor Williams joins local education leaders to raise awareness about College Goal Sunday, a non-profit program to assist college-bound students.



Community News

- [District Celebrates New Beginning](#)
- [Police Seek Information on Carjackings in the Fourth District](#)
- [District Youth Celebrate Legacy of Civil Rights Leader](#)

[Click here](#) to view news releases.

Upcoming Events

1/20 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service

Click here for more information www.mlkday.org.

1/20 DC Commission on National and Community Service Beautification Project

10 am—4 pm

Davis Elementary School

4430 H Street, SE

1/20 18th Annual King Holiday Celebration “Peace Justice and Unity: A Concert for Peace”

10:30 am

UDC Auditorium

4200 Connecticut Avenue, NW Building 46

**1/22 Public Hearing on Siting Halfway Houses in the District of Columbia
Mayor's Community Corrections Facility Siting Advisory Commission**

5 pm—8 pm

Former DC Council Chambers, First Floor

441 4th Street, NW

For more information, call (202) 994-5245

1/25 Forum on Crime and Prevention

8:30 am—1 pm

Eastern Senior High School

1700 East Capitol Street, NE

[Click here](#) to view the Mayor's daily schedule.

